A Study on the Relationship between Personality Traits and Intrapreneurial Behavior of Protégés: Mediating Role of the Mentoring Function

A

Synopsis

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1 Introduction

The global economy is creating profound and substantial changes throughout the world, forcing organizations and industries to carefully examine their purpose and to design strategies to satisfy their multiple stakeholders. The task of management is to become aware of the changing scenario. Given the complex, discontinuous, hyper-competitive, fast changing world around us, it is imperative for corporates to take risks, and adopt creative and innovative approaches. Due to the above, the role of employees in organizations has changed. Decision- making processes have become more decentralized and employees are gaining more discretion and responsibility (Foss et al. 2015). Rather than being passive recipients of changing jobs and products, employees need to adopt roles as "innovators" and "differentiators" (Bowen 2016). More specifically, employees are increasingly required to adopt a more intrapreneurial way of working to deal with or even initiate these changing requirements and directly impact firm's strategic direction. Intrapreneurial employees implement new logics in organizations by using opportunistic tactics, and leverage small changes to spark larger changes in the broader organizations (Heinze and Weber 2016).

Risk taking aptitude is a closely connected attribute of intrapreneurs. Several studies indicate a connect between risk taking behavior of individuals with their personality traits (Nicholson et al. 2005, Czerwonka 2019, Bucciol and Zarri 2017). Mahmoud et al. (2018) discuss that personality forms the behavior of the individuals which affects their performance. De Jong et al. (2011) and Farrukh et al. (2016) argue that personality traits are the important dynamics that influence the intrapreneurial behavior of the person. It helps the individuals to take risk.

Mentoring is an important component for sustained career success. An effective mentoring relationship can influence professional development which can in turn lead to increased employee performance and knowledge sharing, often for both the mentor and the mentee (in the proposed research we use the word mentee and protégé interchangeably). Traditionally, mentoring is a dyadic relationship between a senior, most experienced person (the mentor) who takes up the responsibility and provides guidance by sharing his or her knowledge, skills, expertise, and values to a protégé who is generally a junior employee, is less experienced, and new to the organization. Mentoring is an

effective method of helping inexperienced individuals to develop and progress in their profession. Mentoring relationship ranges from loosely defined, informal collegial associations in which a mentee learns by observation and example to structured, formal agreements between expert and novice co-mentors where each develops professionally through the two way transfer of experience and perspective. Whether the relationship is deemed formal or informal, the goal of mentoring is to provide career advice as well as both professional and personal enrichment.

Over the years, despite considerable attention on intrapreneurship in the scientific and popular literature it is not fully established how companies can nurture intrapreneurial behavior of employees and take its full benefits (Zahra et al.1999 and Mair 2005). There are a few indicative studies that establish the relationship between mentoring and intrapreneurship behavior of employees (Kelley et al. 2005, Mair 2005). Researchers argue that mentoring helps intrapreneurs "make sense" of what it takes to perform entrepreneurial tasks. It helps them in recognizing and reducing their insecurities that further accelerates their entrepreneurial behavior (Chen et al. 1998).

The proposed research is an attempt at exploring the role of personality traits in intrapreneurial behavior of employees and to investigate the extent to which mentoring function mediates this relationship.

2 Review of Literature and Identification of Research Gaps

This section defines the concepts of intrapreneurship, intrapreneurial self-capital, intrapreneurial intention, and intrapreneurial behavior.

2.1 Intrapreneurship : Concept and definitions

Burgelman (1983) coined the term intrapreneurship and Pinchot (1985) popularized it further.As per him, intrapreneur is a person who focuses on innovation and creativity and who transforms a dream or an idea into a profitable venture, by operating within the organizational environment. Antoncic and Hisrich (2003) define intrapreneurship as entrepreneurship in an existing firm. Intrapreneurship has been discussed as a process, as doing new things, as spirit of entrepreneurship within the existing firm (Shetty 2004) and as establishment of new organizations (Antoncic and Hisrich 2003). Gap and Fisher (2007) identify it as an individual action . It is considered as a process of discovering and developing

the opportunities to create value through innovation and grasping that opportunity without considering resources or the location of the entrepreneur (Menzel et al. 2007).Fischer (2011) defines intrapreneurship as a process of corporate rejuvenation in the recognized firms.

2.2 Intrapreneurial Self-capital

Intrapreneurial self-capital is a relatively new term in the organizational psychology literature. Di Fabio (2014) defines intrapreneurial self-capital as the core of individual intrapreneurial resource used to cope with career and life construction challenges and includes dimensions of core self-evaluation, hardiness, creative self-efficacy, resilience, goal mastery, decisiveness, and vigilance. He found that intrapreneurial self-capital delivers the personal resources to deal with the continuous variations and evolutions by generating innovative solutions that oppose the constraints that are present in environment and turn those constraints into resources. Intrapreneurial self-capital is developed within the positive primary anticipation perspective which represents a combination of resources required to promote and to take precautions for failures in career and life management (Duradoni and Di Fabio,2018).

2.3 Intrapreneurial Intention

Intrapreneurial intention refers to an individual's intentions to turn out to be an intrapreneur, or someone who takes part in the establishment of new businesses within the boundaries of an existing organization in the environment (Martiarena 2013). Intentions directly influence the individual's behavior towards intrapreneurship. Ajzen (2001) revealed that intentions are the strongest indicator or influential mechanism for the behaviors that occur consequently. Solesvik (2013) and Botha and Nyanyom (2011) discuss that intentions involve an individual's identification of knowledge, skills, belief systems, decision-making, and attitude along with the capability to become an intrapreneur.

2.4 Intrapreneurial Behavior

The term 'intrapreneurial behavior' (IB), which originated from the concept of entrepreneurial orientation (EO), is considered to be an employee behavior which represents innovativeness, risk taking, and proactive orientation (Antoncic and Hisrich 2003; Covin and Slevin 1991; Taştan and Güçel 2014). IB also refers to an individual's reactiveness and ability to face challenges in different

situations (De Jong et al. 2011). Several researchers present a discussion of the significance of IB in influencing individual outcomes (Ahmad et al. 2012; Bakar and Mahmood 2014; Bakar et al. 2016; Fellnhofer et al. 2016; Ismail et al.2012; Stewart 2009). Intrapreneurial behavior has also been explained as intrapreneuring, (Pinchot 1985) and corporate venturing (Vesper 1990). Taştan and Güçel (2014) discovered that intrapreneurial behaviors can be enhanced through supportive and innovative organizational culture. Ahmad et al. (2012) suggest that the Intrapreneurial behavior is always associated with the positive outcomes such as higher job satisfaction and greater organizational commitment (Holt et al. 2007). At the organizational level, the positive outcomes arise in the form of objective profitability and improved organizational performance (Zahra and Covin 1995; Zahra and Garvis 2000).

2.5 Mentoring Functions: The Concept, Types, and Definition

Traditionally, mentoring has been defined as a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced protégé for the purpose of helping and developing the protégé's career (Kram 1985; Levinson et al.1978; Noe et al. 2002; Ragins 1999; Wanberg et al. 2003). Although the definition of mentoring has been refined over the years, a core feature that defines mentoring relationships and distinguishes it from other types of personal relationships is that mentoring is a developmental relationship that is embedded within the career context. Whereas learning, growth, and development may occur in many different types of work and close personal relationships, mentoring relationships are unique in that the primary focus of the relationship is on career development and growth. The mentor provides help to protégés on various aspects of that support, direct, guard, represent, and advice the young adults to get their work completed resourcefully (Akarak and Ussahawanitchakit 2008; Rhay et al. 2010).

Mentors are generally viewed as providing two types of functions to their protégés (Kram 1985). First, mentors may offer career functions. Career functions involve a range of behaviors that help protégés "learn the ropes" and prepare them for hierarchical advancement within their organizations. These behaviors include coaching protégés, sponsoring their advancement, increasing their positive exposure and visibility, and offering them protection and challenging assignments. Second, mentors may

provide psychosocial functions. Psychosocial functions build on trust, intimacy, and inter-personal bonds in the relationship and include behaviors that enhance the protégé's professional and personal growth, identity, self-worth, and self-efficacy. They include mentoring behaviors such as offering acceptance and confirmation and providing counseling, friendship, and role-modeling.

2.6 Antecedents of Mentoring Functions

To address the issue of reach and effectiveness of mentoring function, researchers have examined its several antecedents. Borrowing from the organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) theory, Hartman et al. (2014) have examined the role of work attitudes like multi-faceted job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment in explaining willingness to mentor. The above research was conducted from the point of view of mentor. Lankau and Scandura (2002) discuss the role of personal learning in mentoring relationships. Poteat (2012) has explored mentor commitment as a contributor of mentoring function. Several researchers have shown that the mentor's level of commitment to the relationship is positively associated with mentor and protégé reports of relationship satisfaction and quality, as well as mentor and protégé reports of the effectiveness of a formal mentoring program (Allen and Eby 2008; Allen et al. 2006; Allen et al. 2009; Ortiz-Walters and Gilson 2005; Poteat et al. 2009). Allen et al. (2009) found that protégé reports of mentor commitment were positively correlated with the provision of career-related and psychosocial mentoring support, and negatively correlated with protégé reports of negative mentoring experiences. There is a school of thought that attempts to explore how mentors or protégés can influence the value of mentoring relationships (Day and Allen 2004). This group of researchers believes that individual differences, in particular personality characteristics, influence the effectiveness of mentoring relationships (Turban and Lee 2007). They argue that better understanding of how protégé and mentor personality characteristics influence mentoring relationships succeed can help organizations better utilize formal mentoring relationships. In the proposed research, personality type has been identified as an antecedent of mentoring function that finally affects the intrapreneurial behavior of the protégé.

2.7 Consequents of Mentoring Functions

Although the goal of mentoring is to enhance the development of the protégé, mentoring relationships vary in their effectiveness. Researchers related mentoring relationships with objective and subjective measures of career success (Allen et al. 2004). More specifically, mentored individuals report higher compensation, more promotions, and greater career satisfaction, career commitment, and job satisfaction as compared to the non-mentored ones (Allen et al. 2004). Most of the researchers establish the role of mentoring for skill and attitude building. There are a few researchers who have explored the role of mentoring function on job satisfaction and commitment of employees (Weng et al. 2010). Researchers have also identified acquiring strategic knowledge and skills, abilities, and finally career development as the consequences of effective mentoring (Jyoti and Sharma 2015). Some researchers have connected innovation coaching as a possible outcome of mentoring. A line of research on intrapreneurship highlights that mentoring is needed to prepare the protégé to confront with the outside, unrelated world and reflect intrapreneurial behavior (Source: https://www.icopilots.com/innovation-culture). Contemporary management practitioners underscore the significance of professional mentoring for intrapreneurial behavior of employees expressed in terms of restructuring the management processes, coming up with unique product ideas or actionable feedback on improvement, analyzing new monetization opportunities, reflecting on the customer support workflow and so on (Source: https://www.mariopeshev.com/business/management/intrapreneurship-business-guide). This research proposes to explore intrapreneurial behavior as an outcome of the mentoring function.

2.8 Mentor's Experience as the Potential Moderator of the Identified Relationship

Mentors are the individuals with advanced knowledge, skills, and values who are dedicated in providing upward support and flexibility to their protégé's professions (Hunt and Michael 1983; Kram 1985). They take interest in and willingly invest their time for encouraging a less experienced junior employee (the protégé).

The protégé benefits from the experience of the mentor as the latter experiences by mentoring several protégés (Jacobi 1991; Kram 1985; Rhodes 2005). Previous researchers have explored the role of

mentor experience for successful mentoring. There is evidence to support that protégés gain more from mentor with greater work experience (DuBois et al. 2011) because this provide them greater self-confidence (Karcher et al. 2005). Thus, the mentors provide the benefit to their mentees by their networks which they have created from their experience (Moore et. al. 2018). It is observed that previous mentoring experiences of the mentor may also influence prospects about the subsequent mentoring relationships (Spencer 2007; Spencer and Basualdo-Delmonico 2014). The present researcher proposes to explore mentor's experience (refers to number of years one has worked as a mentor) as the potential moderator of the relationship between the mentoring function and intrapreneurial behavior.

2.9 Identified Research Gaps

After the extensive literature review the following research gaps are identified:

1. There is a paucity of research that connects personality traits and mentoring function with the intrapreneurial behavior of employees.

2. There is a lack of research on intrapreneurial self-capital and its manifestation into intrapreneurial intention and intrapreneurial behavior as the final outcome.

3 Overview of the Proposed Research

3.1 Need of the study

Researchers have established the relevance of mentoring functions for enhancing performance of protégés. They have also indicated the role of personality traits for the success of mentoring functions. There are a few studies that establish mentoring functions with intrapreneurial behavior of employees. These studies have been conducted on stand-alone basis. Comprehensive framework that connects personality traits, mentoring functions, and intrapreneurial behavior is missing and needs to be empirically validated.

3.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the effect of personality traits on mentoring functions received by the protégés.

2. To analyze the effect of mentoring functions on intrapreneurial self-capital, intrapreneurial intentions, intrapreneurial behavior.

3. To evaluate the moderating effect of mentor experience on the relationship between mentoring function and intrapreneurial behavior.

4. To provide useful insights to industry and other stakeholders in general how mentoring relationship success can help organizations in nurturing desired behavior of employees.

3.3 The Conceptual Framework

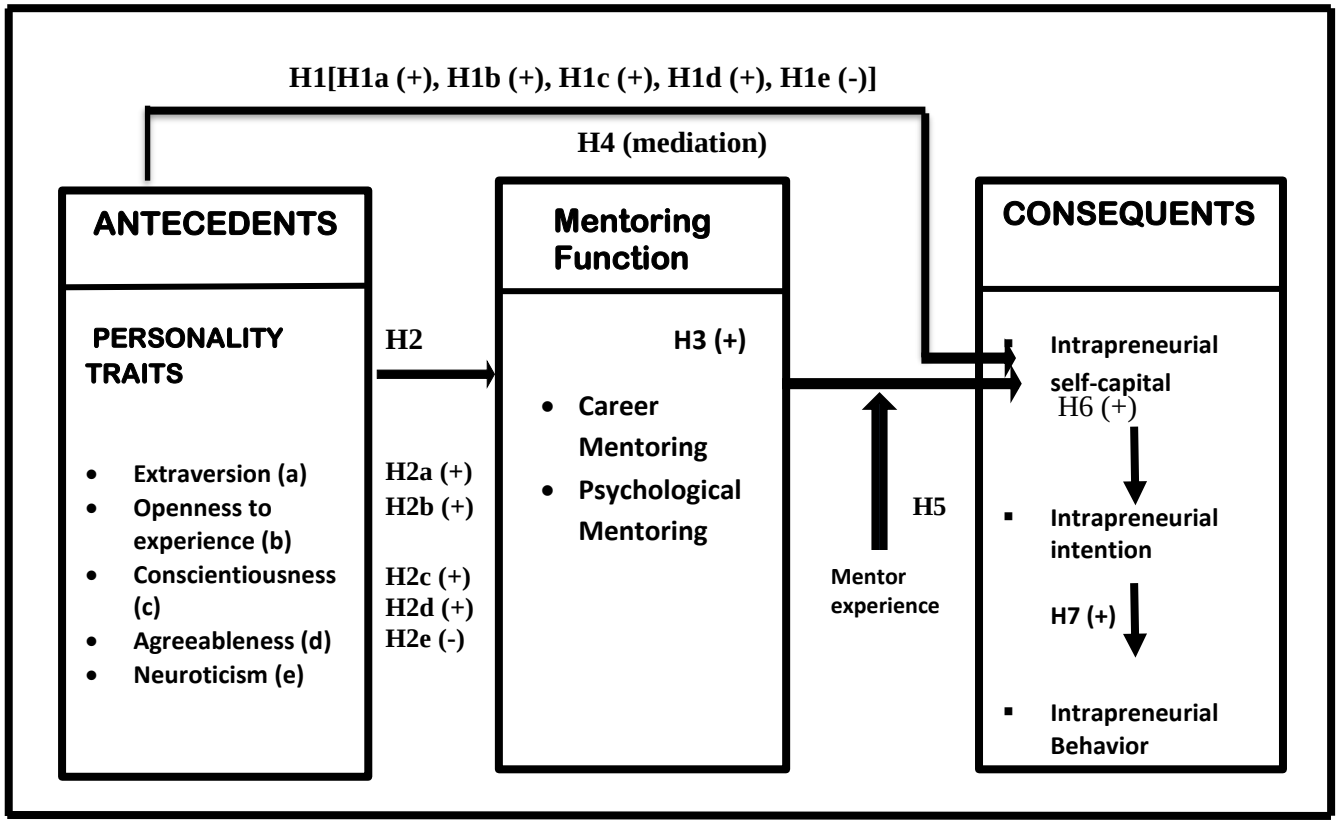

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

(Source: Compiled by the researcher)

3.4 Definition of the Constructs:

***1. Personality Traits*-** Personality traits reflect people's characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Trait psychology rests on the idea that people differ from one another in terms of where they stand on a set of basic trait dimensions that persist over time and across situations. The Five-Factor Model is the most widely used system of traits. This model includes five broad traits: openness

to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Openness to experience refers to experience that encompasses through creativity, receptiveness to new ideas and values, and thinking-out-of-the-box (McCrea and Costa 1997). Conscientiousness is exemplified by being systematic, disciplined, responsible, careful, detail-oriented, organized having a need for achievement and dependable. Extraversion is associated with the sociability, self-confidence, ambition, adventurous as well as expressive (Watson and Clark 1997). Agreeableness relates with being cooperative, care and concern for others, and being flexible. Neuroticism indicates negative feelings such as anxiety, insecurity, emotional instability, depression, anger and hostility (Costa and McCrae 1992; Goldner 2016).

2. Mentoring Function- Mentoring functions refer to the guidance given by the mentor to the protégé in the mentoring process. Details of mentoring function have already been discussed in previous section.

3. Intrapreneurial self-capital:Intrapreneurial self-capital is defined as the positive self-evaluation of the self-concept, to feel in control over life events, to creatively solve problems, to change constraints into resources, to develop one's own skills, to apply decision-making skills to every aspect of life, and to make decision carefully (Di Fabio 2014) .

4. Intrapreneurial intentions:This refers to conscious state of mind that directs attention and therefore experience and action toward a specific object or pathway to achieve it. These intentions are responsible for developing innovative ideas, new products, services and even new markets. (Ireland et al. 2009; Hamidi et al. 2008).

5. Intrapreneurial Behavior-This refers to the pursuit of creative or new solutions to challenges confronting the firm, including the development or enhancement of old and new products and services, markets, administrative techniques and technologies for performing organizational functions, as well as changes in strategy, organizing, and dealing with competitors (Antoncic and Hisrich 2003).

3.5 Research Questions

The proposed research aims to address the following research questions:

1. How do personality traits affect the mentoring relationship in organizations?

2. How do personality traits affect intrapreneurial self-capital, intrapreneurial intentions, and intrapreneurial behavior of employees?
3. Do the mentoring functions mediate the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial behavior?
4. Does the mentor's experience affect these relationships?

3.6 Proposed Hypotheses

Following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Personality traits are related to intrapersonal self-capital more precisely.

H1a: Extraversion is positively related to intrapreneurial self-capital.

H1b: Openness to experience is positively related to intrapreneurial self-capital.

H1c: Conscientiousness is positively related to intrapreneurial self-capital.

H1d: Agreeableness is positively related to intrapreneurial self-capital.

H1e: Neuroticism is negatively related to intrapreneurial self-capital.

H2: Personality traits are positively related to the mentoring function. More specifically,

H2a: Extraversion is positively related to (i) career mentoring function and (ii) psychosocial mentoring.

H2b: Openness to experience is positively related to (i) career mentoring function and (ii) psychosocial mentoring.

H2c: Conscientiousness is positively related to (i) career mentoring function and (ii) psychosocial mentoring.

H2d: Agreeableness is positively related to (i) career mentoring function and (ii) psychosocial mentoring.

H2e: Neuroticism is negatively related to (i) career mentoring function and (ii) psychosocial mentoring.

H3: Mentoring function is positively related to intrapreneurial self-capital. More specifically,

H3a: Career mentoring function is positively related to intrapreneurial self-capital

H3b: Psychosocial mentoring function is positively related to intrapreneurial self-capital

H4: Mentoring function mediates the relationship between personality traits and intrapreneurial self-capital.

H5: Mentor Experience moderates the relationship between mentoring function and intrapreneurial self-capital. More specifically,

H5a: Mentor experience moderates the relationship between career mentoring function and intrapreneurial self-capital.

H5b: Mentor experience moderates the relationship between psychosocial mentoring function and intrapreneurial self-capital.

H6: Intrapreneurial self-capital is positively related to intrapreneurial intention.

H7: Intrapreneurial intention is positively related to intrapreneurial behavior.

4 Research Methodology

4.1 Scope of the Study

The purpose of this research is to find the validity of the model proposed above. The study will be conducted throughout Pan India.

4.2 Instruments/ Techniques to be used

The study will use multi-methods to validate the proposed conceptual framework. For quantitative analysis, survey will be conducted using standardized scale to measure the variables. The researcher will also develop appropriate instruments for unexplored variables. For qualitative analysis, depth interview method will be used.

4.3 Statistical Measurements-

Relevant statistical measurements like ANOVA, correlation and regression analysis etc.

4.4 Sampling

4.4.1 Sample composition

The proposed study will be conducted from the point of view of protégé (mentee). Sample will be drawn from two broad categories of respondents:

(a) Potential managers (students of professional courses like B.tech and MBA, who undergo industry internship and work under mentor for specific period of time say for 4-6 months). The data collected from them will be used for quantitative analysis.

(b) Real managers (industry professionals): The data collected will be used for qualitative analysis.

It is important to note here that though the proposed study will be conducted from the point of view of mentees, data will also be collected from the mentors of the potential managers while they are on their industry internship. The data collected from their mentor will help to generate robust findings. Similarly, under the category of real managers, mentees and their mentors both will be contacted.

4.4.2 Sampling Techniques

Sample Techniques used will be non –probability judgmental sampling to target the respondents for the study. To overcome limitations of the non-probability sampling, randomization will be introduced through random sequencing of the online/offline questionnaire to be used for the study.

4.4.3 Sample Size

To calculate the sample size, there are several formulae as suggested by various researchers. For example, the formula of Godden (2004) indicates how to measure sample size in case of finite or infinite population. The limitation of all such methods is that these do not take into consideration the number of variables in the study. For multivariate researches, any method that does not take into consideration the variables of the study, does not deemed to be fit to estimate the bias-free sample size. Therefore, for the proposed research, sample size is decided based on the sample size inducted for various similar studies reviewed for the purpose of the current proposal. A sample size of 250 is proposed for the quantitative analysis. It is important to mention here that there will be 250 pairs comprising of potential managers (mentees) along with their mentors. Thus total number of mentors and mentees together will be 500.

This is not only parallel to work of several other researchers on the similar context but also coincide with a number of rules of thumb that are considered for multivariate analysis. One of the most commonly accepted rule of thumb is to keep the sample size 5 to 10 times larger than the total number

of the variables proposed. The proposed sample size of 250 suffices the purpose on this criterion as well. Apart from this, 5 in-depth interviews of 5 pairs of mentor and mentees from the industry will also be conducted to support the findings of quantitative analysis.

4.4.4 Significance (Implications) of the Proposed Study

Contribution to Literature

This study proposes a conceptual framework that identifies mentoring function as a predictor of intrapreneurial behavior of employees. This will unleash interesting findings. Research in intrapreneurial behavior is at an evolutionary stage in literature. The study will contribute significantly to the existing theory of intrapreneurship.

Implications for Managers

This research highlights the benefits of mentoring function for the desired intrapreneurial behavior of employees. This indeed will provide relevant insights to practicing managers. Apart from this, this study is also expected to reveal in details how personality traits play a role in successful mentoring function, Therefore, the findings of the study will also hold practical relevance to the managers.

Implications for Policy Makers

In order to promote entrepreneurial culture, Government of India has launched 'Mentor India' program under its flagship initiative- Atal Innovation Mission. Mentor India is as a strategic nation building initiative to engage leaders who can guide and mentor schools students to experience, learn and practice future skills for entrepreneurship. The findings of the proposed study around mentoring function and intrapreneurial behavior will hold significance relevance for such policy initiatives.

5 Proposed Chapterization

This thesis will contain the following chapters:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

Chapter 3 – Conceptual Framework, Research Design and Methodology

Chapter 4 –Data Collection and Analysis

Chapter 5 – Results and Interpretations

Chapter 6 – Conclusions, Managerial Implications and Direction for Future Research

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